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HC HANATOYUME COMICS 別冊花とゆめ

パレスメイヂ 4

久世番子

HANATOYUME COMICS

PALACE MEIDI

4

KUZE BANKO

T/N: Hiyoku-no-tori can also mean a happily married couple.

ANCIENT PEOPLE TOLD OF TWO BIRDS MALE AND FEMALE WITH ONLY ONE WING EACH WITHOUT SHARING THEIR WINGS THE MALE AND FEMALE CANNOT FLY
THE NAME OF THIS BIRD IS "HIYOKU."

パレス・メイヂ
其ノ十三

I'M SAEKI OF THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL DAILY NEWS!
PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ACCOMPANY YOU TODAY FOR AN ARTICLE. I'D BE DELIGHTED...
PLEASE STOP THE PHOTOGRAPHY AND THAT LOUD VOICE.
YOU'LL SCARE THE BIRDS
OH, PLEASE EXCUSE US!
EH?
Idiot, stop the camera!
YOUR HIGHNESS,
IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO LEAVE
BECAUSE TODAY, I'M GOING DUCK HUNTING

AT THE HEIGHT OF AUTUMN, MIGRATORY BIRDS COME FLYING
THAT IS DUCK HUNTING SEASON
DUCKS GATHER NEAR THE WATER IN THE IMPERIAL GARDEN
EVERY YEAR FOREIGN AMBASSADORS AND THEIR WIVES ARE INVITED TO COME "DUCK HUNTING."
Ladies and gentlemen,
I WILL EXPLAIN THE METHODS OF THE HUNT...
Umm
TO RECEIVE THE INVITED GUESTS,
MEMBERS OF THE MIYA FAMILY JOIN THE HUNT
AT THE EMPEROR'S COMMAND, A PLEASANT LUNCH IS GIVEN TO THE HUNTERS ON THIS LATE AUTUMN DAY.

THE HUNTING BUREAU IS SKILLED IN HUNTING,
BUT NOT VERSED IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES. ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN
whoosh
FIRST, ALL OF US MUST BECOME BIRDS.
HA HA HA HA
BIRDS?
RIGHT. ALL OF YOU DUCKS CAME FROM FAR UP NORTH
THERE IS AN ISLAND IN A POND SURROUNDED BY A THICKET.
FROM IT, THERE ARE A SERIES OF MAN-MADE CANALS.
FLYING HIGH ABOVE, THIS IS WHAT YOU SEE.

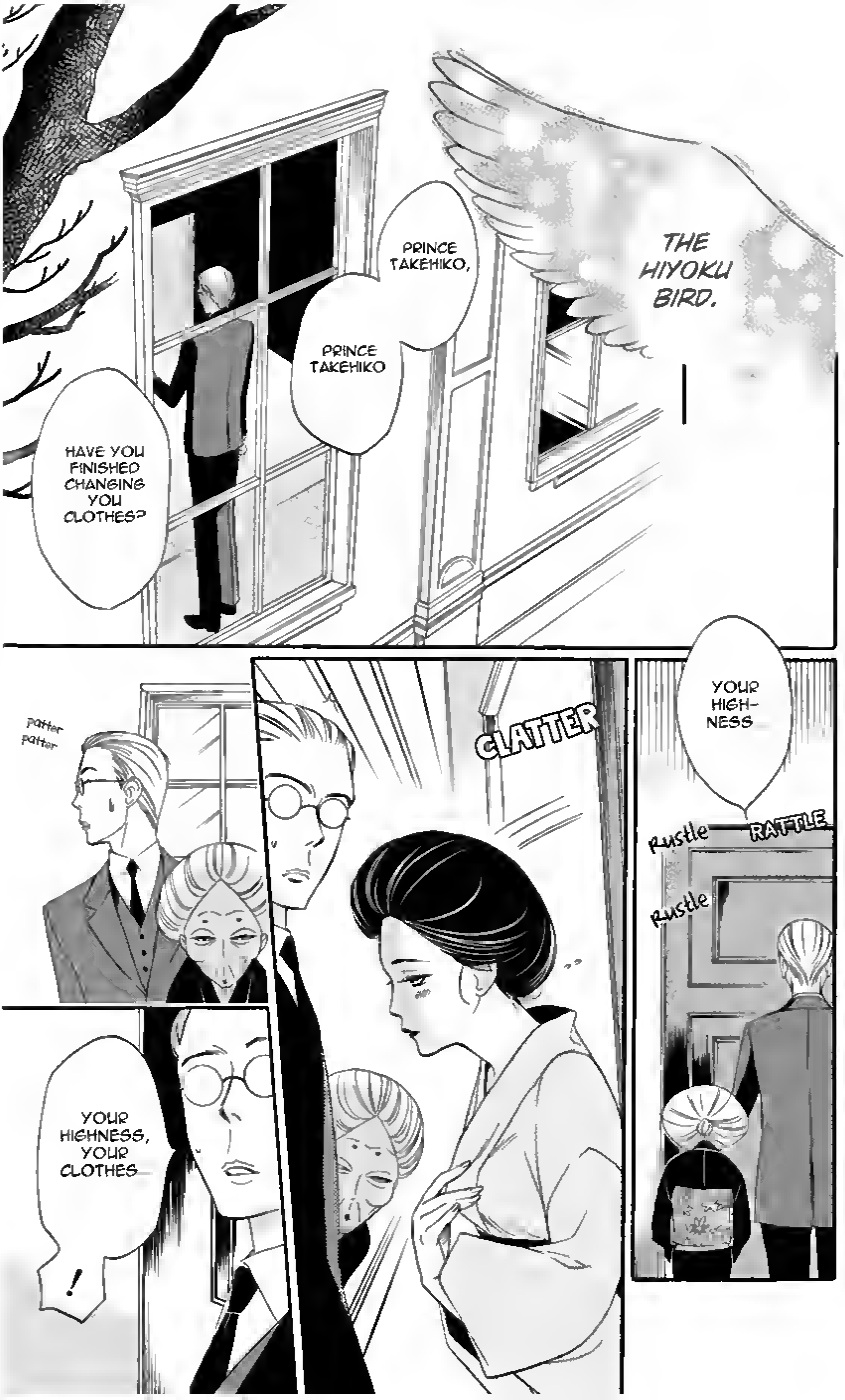
"AHH, THIS IS JUST THE RIGHT PLACE TO REST OUR WINGS."
YOU SAY ALL OF YOU NOW WANT TO DESCEND ONTO THE POND
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT THESE ARE HUNTING GROUNDS
UNAWARE OF THE DECEPTION, YOU DUCKS ARE LURED INTO THE CANAL AND TOWARDS THE BAIT
Bait?
Follow me for the bait
TAP TAP TAP TAP
THEY ARE TRAINED TO ENTER THE CANAL AT THE SOUND OF A BOARD BEING STRUCK IN ORDER TO CREATE A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY
THESE DECOY DUCKS WERE TAMED BY THE HUNTING BUREAU
HOWEVER, THIS POND STILL HAS SOME EARLIER VISITORS
Quack
ALL OF YOU ARE NOW TRAPPED!
YOU TRY TO FLY AWAY, BUT YOUR WINGS ARE SLOW TO OPEN IN CONFINES OF THE CANAL
QUACK
THERE IN THE CANAL, THE DUCKS ARE BLIND TO THE THE PEOPLE ON THE BANKS.
THE TRAINED DUCKS ARE UNCON-CERNED

Ahahaha
WHOOSH
ALAS, YOU ARE NOW IN THEIR NETS
WOW, FROM HER MAJESTY!
YOU REALLY ARE CLOSE, AREN'T YOU?
WELL, THAT IS THE PROCEDURE
Be quiet for the ducks...
WHEN HER MAJESTY WAS STILL THE IMPERIAL PRINCESS, SHE TAUGHT ME THE BASICS OF DUCK HUNTING
WHEN THE RUSSIAN PRINCE WAS INJURED EARLIER,
I READ IN THE PAPER THAT YOU PROTECTED HER MAJESTY
IF YOU BECAME THE PRINCE CONSORT, IT WOULD MAKE HER MAJESTY HAPPY TOO

T/N. Prince Consort = The husband of a female emperor.

IN THIS COUNTRY, A PRINCE CONSORT IS NOT PERMITTED.
NOR CAN A FEMALE EMPEROR MARRY AFTER HER ABDICATION
BECAUSE THAT BEAUTIFUL AND WISE PERSON WILL HAVE TO REMAIN ALONE, I ALSO WISH TO REMAIN ALONE...
HOWEVER, TIMES ARE CHANGING, AND I HOPE THAT SOON THIS CUSTOM CAN BE ABOLISHED
MIYA -SAMA
Kyun
MIYA -SAMA, I AM ALSO YOUR ALLY!
MIYA -SAMA SHOULD BE ABLE TO MARRY THE ONE HE LOVES
Kyun
Kyun
chatter chatter

WOMEN JUST EAT IT UP.
"THE EMPEROR'S FORMER FIANCÉ CONTINUES TO REMEMBER HER."
Amazing
HE'S POPULAR AMONG THE FOREIGN LADIES TOO.
WELL, WITH HIS APPEA-RANCE AND POSITION
HE CAN ENJOY HIMSELF.
ENJOY MYSELF?
NO.
I HAVE SEARCHED FOR


THE HIYOKU BIRD.
PRINCE TAKEHIKO,
PRINCE TAKEHIKO
HAVE YOU FINISHED CHANGING YOU CLOTHES?
patter patter
CLATTER
YOUR HIGH-NESS
rustle
RATTLE
rustle
YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR CLOTHES
!

He's healthy getting up so early
bu
bu
bu
I DON'T WANT TO GO
STILL?
DUCK HUNTING...
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, YOUR HIGHNESS
IT IS SO THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE MIYA FAMILY CAN BECOME FRIENDLY WITH HIS MAJESTY
IT WAS DURING THE MEIJI EMPEROR'S REIGN
I WAS EIGHTEEN
SIGH

THE FIRST TIME I WAS ORDERED TO GO DUCK HUNTING
REALLY?
THIS WILL BE FUN, ROKUMIYA!
YOUNG NOBLES, THE DUCKS ARE ENTERING THE CANAL PLEASE TAKE A PEEK AT THEM THROUGH HERE
tap tap tap
IT'S CALLED HUNTING, BUT IT WOULD ONLY BE FUN FOR LITTLE GIRLS
THE BIRDS ARE DRAWN INTO THE CANAL AND CAUGHT IN NETS

AS THE MIYA FAMILY'S HEIR, I HAVE BEEN MERELY PREPARED TO CONTINUE DOWN THE PATH.
THIS HUNT IS SO BORING
MY DAYS ARE ALL THE SAME
quack
WAAHH

FLAP
!
Fwoosh
WHOOSH
I caught it!!
THE NET...
WHOOSH
SHIT!!
Splendid
LOOK, ROKUMIYA! I CAUGHT IT

oooooo
TOO SURPRISED BY THE FIRST BIRD
quack
YOUR HIGH-NESS,
NEXT TIME WE'LL MAKE SURE THE DUCK IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU...
COUGH
IRRITATED
DON'T DO THAT!
TWO BIRDS!
CHEER
FLAP
FLAP
YOU'VE CAUGHT TWO BIRDS IN THE SAME NET...
SPLENDID, AKIKO-SAMA!

YOUR HIGHNESS! THAT'S THE IMPERIAL PRINCESS
initiated
ISN'T YOUR NET EMPTY?
EVEN THOUGH YOU SAID THIS WAS ONLY FOR LITTLE GIRLS,
QUACK
Whoa!!!
HUH? IMPERIAL PRINCESS...
I'LL TEACH YOU.
IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME HUNTING DUCKS?

WHAT IS THIS SHED FOR?
PLEASE TELL ME
MIYA -SAMA,
Gasp
A GIANT PEEP-HOLE
IT'S A PLACE TO WATCH THE DUCKS GATHER ON THE POND
FOR EXCHANGING LOVERS TALK A CRAMPED SPACE IS PERFECT
WOULD YOU USE IT THAT WAY TOO?
BUT A SMALL SPACE IS ROMANTIC
IT'S A BIT CRAMPED WITH TWO PEOPLE

WELL,
POSSIBLY
TO CATCH DUCKS YOU HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT THEM.
DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MALES AND FEMALES?
THE FEMALES HAVE THE BEAUTIFUL COLORED FEATHERS.
WRONG! THE BRIGHT ONES ARE MALE
IT'S THE SAME WITH PEACOCKS AND PHEASANTS.
irritated
Oh, is that right?
ACTING SO PROUD AROUND ME,
IF SHE WASN'T A PRINCESS, I WOULD IGNORE HER.

FEMALE
MALE
EVERY YEAR, THE DUCKS COME ALL THE WAY FROM THE NORTH TO HIBERNATE FOR THE WINTER
DURING THE WINTER, THE FEATHERS OF THE MALES CHANGE TO THE BEAUTIFUL BLUE-GREEN COLOR THEY SEARCH FOR FEMALE MATES IN THIS POND
SO, WHEN SPRING COMES, TWO BIRDS RETURN NORTH TOGETHER TO LAY THEIR EGGS
SHE MAKES ME ANGRY
glance
BUT, SHE ISN'T BAD-LOOKING.
ANNOYED
HOW COULD THE MIYA FAMILY PRINCE NOT KNOW THESE THINGS

YOU TOO! YOU DON'T KNOW THE WAYS OF THE WORLD, PRINCESS!
IMPERIAL PRINCESS, YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT DUCKS.
inch backwards
BUT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HOW HUMAN MEN AND WOMEN PAIR OFF?
SHALL I TEACH YOU?

SHOVE
EXCUSE ME,
"KUROHASHI" HAS JUST ENTERED THE CANAL!
T/N: Kuro = black, hashi = end.
HURRY
AND VERY HARD TO CATCH
HE'S WISE AND CAUTIOUS,
"KUROHASHI"?
HE'S THE BIGGEST BLUE NECK IN THE POND.
SINCE HE HAS A BIG BLACK MARK ON THE FRONT OF HIS BEAK, THE PALACE HUNTING MASTERS CALL HIM "KUROHASHI."

THE SECRET TO DUCK HUNTING IS NOT BEING SURPRISED ONLY LOOK AT WHAT'S IN FRONT OF YOU.
thump
LET'S CATCH HIM, MIYA!
JUST HAVING A GIRL BESIDE ME SHOULDN'T DO THIS.
thump
thump
THIS HAMME-RING INSIDE ME
thump
thump
WHAT IS THIS?
?
YES.

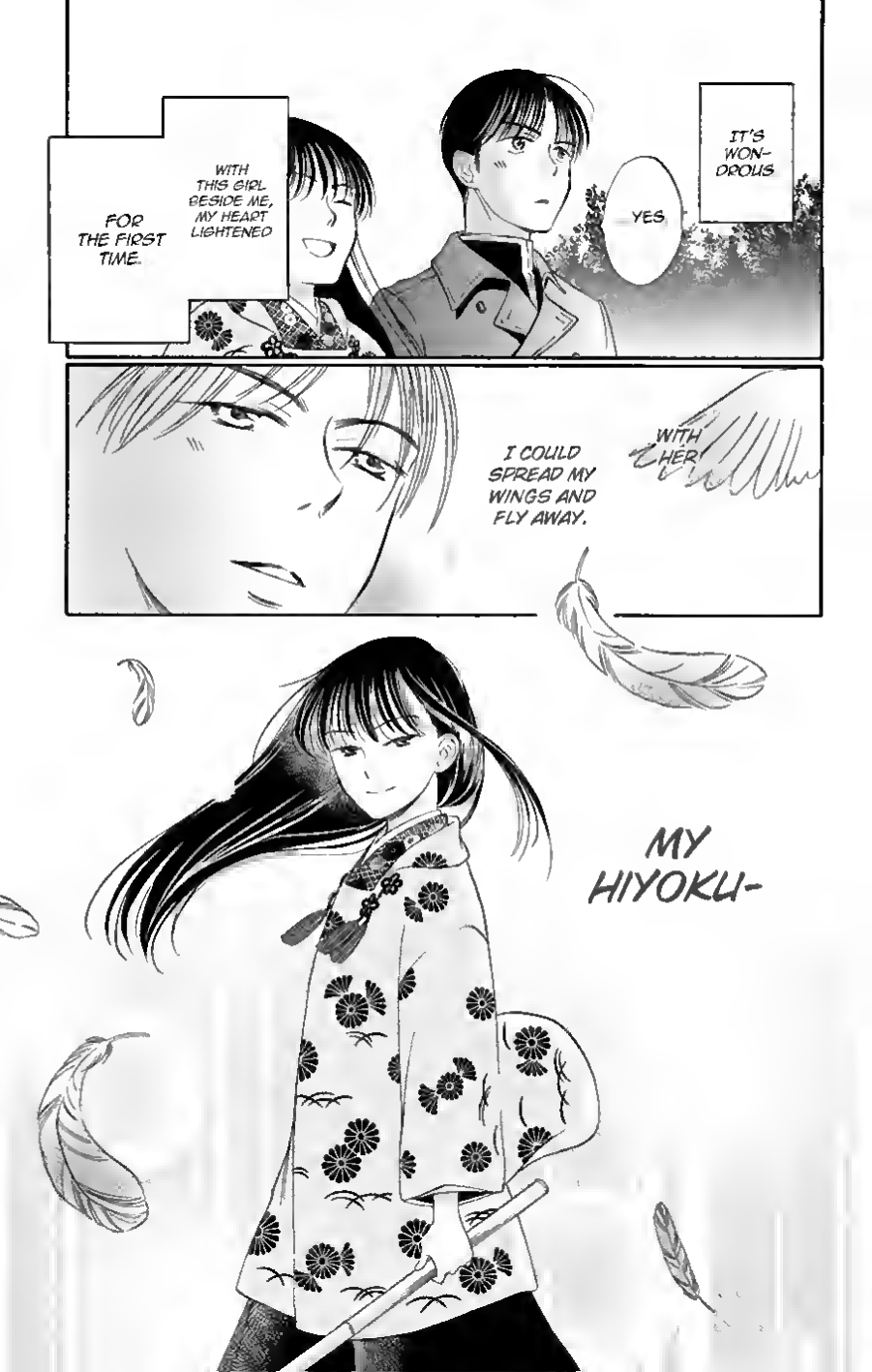
NO, UNTIL NOW, NOTHING'S EVER MADE ME FEEL THIS WAY.
whoosh
flap
FLAP
I'M NOT SURPRISED
I'M ONLY LOOKING AHEAD!

I CAUGHT KUROHASHI IN MY NET!
SPLENDID, YOUR HIGHNESS!

IT'S YOUR CATCH, MIYA. TAKE IT OUT OF THE NET.
TAKE IT OUT OF THE NET?
Why would I do that?
HERE, YOUR HIGH-NESS
IT CAN'T FLY IF YOU TIE IT'S WINGS TOGETHER
LIKE LIKE THIS?
It looks painful
WINGS TIED BEHIND
LET ME DRY MY HANDS.
Shimmer
FLAP
AH!

HUH?
FLAP
They were tied too loosely.
...
shock
We can give His Highness a different duck.
Hurry!
AHH
THE FEELING WHEN IT FLEW UP HIGH,
YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THAT!
SO DIFFERENT FROM MY OWN SURROUNDINGS,
WHICH ALWAYS PULL ME TO THE EARTH.
ha ha ha ha

LOOK,
HE'S ALREADY FLOWN SO HIGH
Imperial Princess
HA HA HA HA HA
EVEN KUROHASHI WANTS TO SURVIVE, MIYA!
SO PRETTY


IT'S WON-DROUS
YES
WITH THIS GIRL BESIDE ME, MY HEART LIGHTENED
FOR THE FIRST TIME.
WITH HER
I COULD SPREAD MY WINGS AND FLY AWAY.
MY HIYOKU-

HUH? MIYA-SAMA,
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
COME WITH ME.
I DIDN'T USE MY NET.
AREN'T YOU HUNTING?
HOW IS EVERY-THING?
YES, MIYA-SAMA, IT'S ALREADY IN PLACE
bow
Why are these two here?
EVERYONE HAS ALREADY CAUGHT THEIR DUCKS AND GONE TO EAT LUNCH.

AH, SINCE NOON, THE SON OF HUNTING MASTER KUGA
HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO HUNT WITH HIS FRIEND
This is this net
.....
I INVITED TOUTSUJI, BUT THAT GUY SAID "I COULDN'T DESTROY LIFE."
YEAH!
ARE YOU GOOD AT HUNTING, KUGA-SAN?
hehe
But please bring me duck meat

WELL, MISONO,
THE SECRET TO DUCK HUNTING IS-
"DON'T BE SURPRISED ONLY LOOK AT WHAT'S IN FRONT OF YOU"!
HER MAJESTY TAUGHT ME THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME I WENT HUNTING
Oh
IT'S.
FLAP
FLAP
WOW
!

IT'S KURO-HASHI!
MISONO HAS CAUGHT KUROHASHI!
THIS IS KURO-HATSU?
HE'S THE KING OF THE DUCKS
AWESOME, MISONO!
THIS IS...
quack
WHY?
WHY DID YOU CHOOSE
THIS WORTH-LESS BOY?

YOU ARE A NOBLE WOMAN
A BOY WITHOUT POSITION OR POWER.
I WAS NOT-

quack
flap
flap
.....
OH!
HE ES-
CAPED...

FLAP
Aaa
Swoosh
HUH?
flap
flap
flap
YOU'VE CAUGHT HIM!!
THE HAWK HAS BROUGHT HIM DOWN!

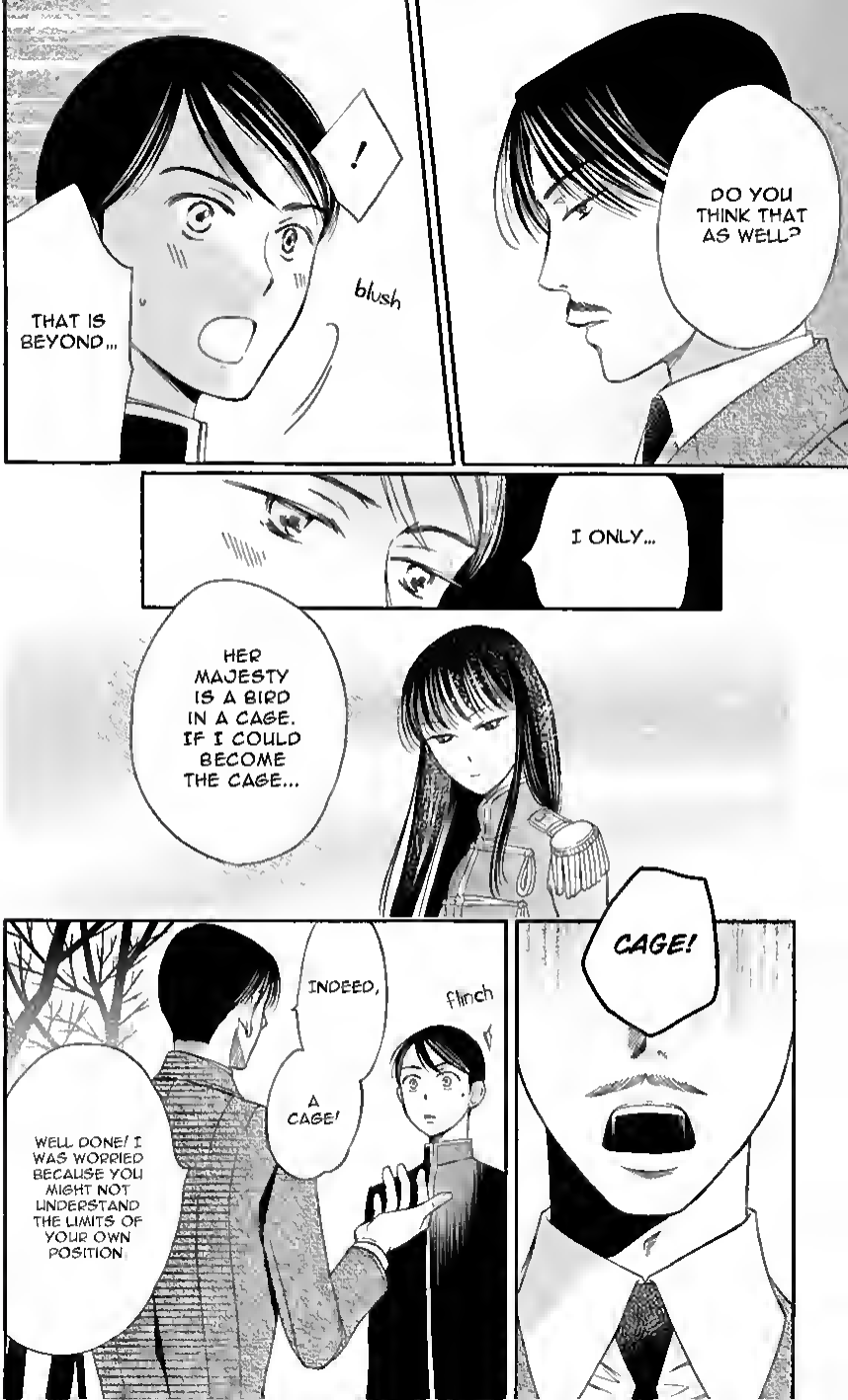
FLAP
FLAP
IF THAT HAPPENS, OTHER BIRDS WILL NO LONGER APPROACH THE CANAL
THERE-FORE,
DOI'S
WHEN THIS DUCK ESCAPES FROM THE NET, IT RETURNS TO THE POND TO WARN ITS FELLOW DUCKS.
IT'S ESSENTIAL TO USE A HAWK TO TAKE IT DOWN.
ROKUJOUIN-NO-MIYA.

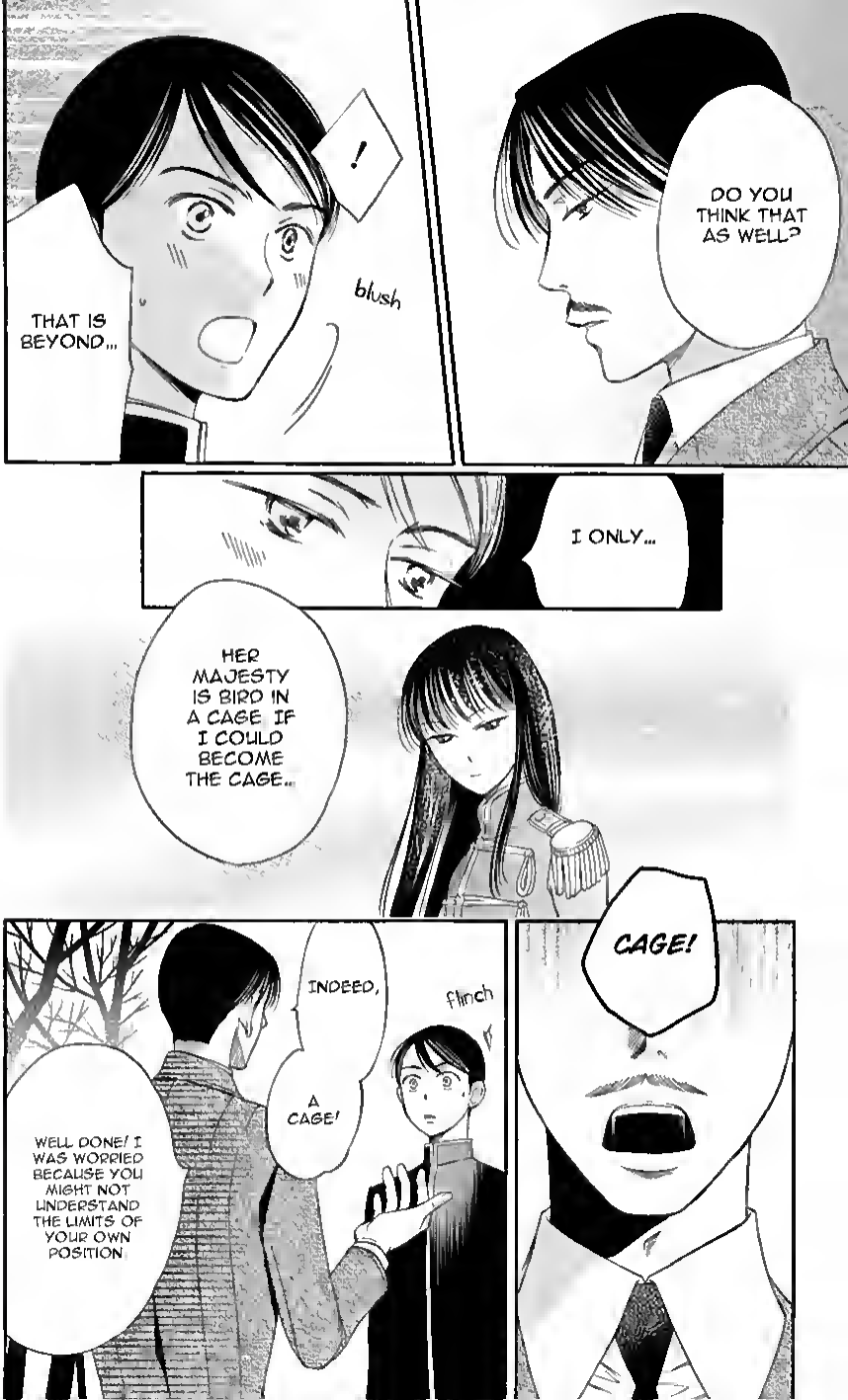
KAW
KAW
THAT RACKET JUST NOW WILL HAVE SCARED AWAY THE DUCKS.
GO TO ANOTHER CANAL TO CONTINUE HUNTING.
flap
flap
Y-YES.
Where did Saeki san go
Huh?
MISONO.
Hey!
crowded
NO, SINCE IT WAS YOUR FALCON THAT BROUGHT IT DOWN,
IT IS YOUR CATCH.
YOU'VE FORGOT -TEN
YOUR CATCH

THE FIRST TIME, HER MAJESTY WAS STILL THE IMPERIAL PRINCESS
WE CAUGHT HIM TOGETHER, BUT HE ESCAPED THROUGH MY CARELESSNESS...
Hehe
THIS IS THE SECOND TIME I HAVE CAUGHT KUROHASHI
.....
IT'S A PLEASANT MEMORY
RIGHT. SHE REMEMBERS IT TOO?
HER MAJESTY TOLD ME
...YES.
"WILL KUROHASHI MAKE IT HERE AGAIN THIS YEAR?"
"TELL ME IF YOU SEE HIM THERE, MISONO."
HER MAJESTY ALSO ASKED ME,

IF KUROHASHI WAS DOING WELL,
SO...
DID HE
LET IT ESCAPE ON PURPOSE?

I...
MET HER MAJESTY FOR THE FIRST TIME HERE
I WAS STILL A STUDENT, AND HER MAJESTY WAS STILL A PLAYFUL PRINCESS.
I WAS STRANGELY FASCINATED BY HER.
I THOUGHT THAT IF WE HAD WINGS, SHE COULD ALSO FLY WITH ME LIKE THE HIYOKU BIRD.

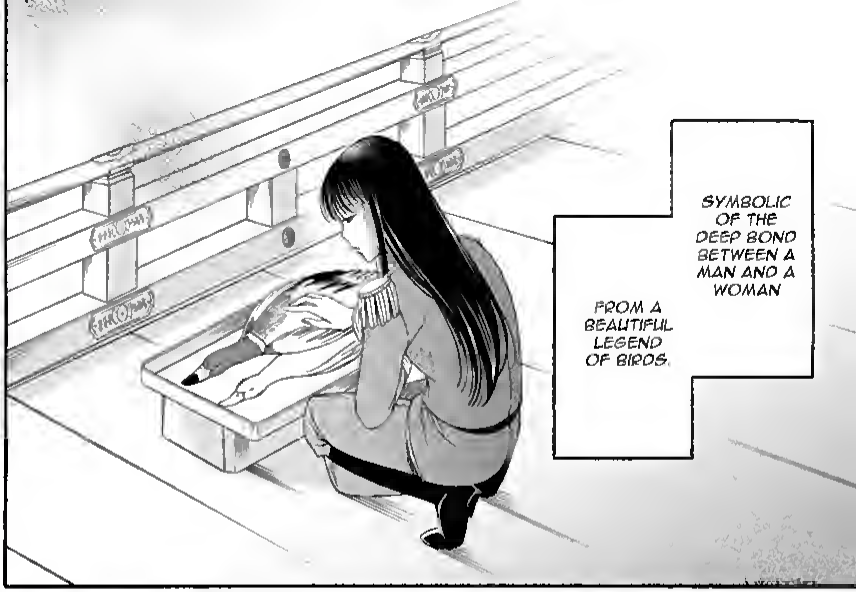

!
blush
THAT IS BEYOND...
DO YOU THINK THAT AS WELL?
I ONLY...
HER MAJESTY IS A BIRD IN A CAGE. IF I COULD BECOME THE CAGE...
flinch
INDEED, A CAGE!
WELL DONE! I WAS WORRIED BECAUSE YOU MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND THE LIMITS OF YOUR OWN POSITION.
CAGE!


!
blush
THAT IS BEYOND...
DO YOU THINK THAT AS WELL?
I ONLY...
HER MAJESTY IS BIRD IN A CAGE IF I COULD BECOME THE CAGE..
flinch
INDEED, A CAGE!
WELL DONE! I WAS WORRIED BECAUSE YOU MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND THE LIMITS OF YOUR OWN POSITION.
CAGE!

RIGHT. YOU CAN BE A CAGE
IT IS FINE FOR YOU TO BE BESIDE A NOBLE BIRD
BUT...
A BIRD CAN ONLY HAVE ANOTHER BIRD AS ITS MATE

I'VE SEEN THAT BOY SOMEWHERE
shoo shoo
A TAME DUCK
HMM,

THE HIYOKU BIRD
THE PAIR OF BIRDS FLY INTO THE SKY AS ONE
!
What a large blue neck
YOUR MAJESTY,
ROKUJOUIN-NO-MIYA SENT THEM AS A GIFT FROM HIS HUNTING
THIS WAS
WERE YOU FINALLY CAUGHT?
KURO-HASHI...
reach


SYMBOLIC OF THE DEEP BOND BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN
FROM A BEAUTIFUL LEGEND OF BIRDS.

I remembered!!
Huh?

Indeed.
I THINK HE LOOKS TOO OLD TO BE AN ATTENDANT.
Is that so?
SAEKI-SAN?
Please let go of me!
BACK THEN HE REFUSED TO TALK TO ME FOR AN ARTICLE
THAT GUY WAS A CHAMBERLAIN ATTENDANT!

HMM...
ABOUT ROKUJOUIN-NO-MIYA,
THE EMPEROR,
AND THAT BOY...
!
FLAP
I SMELL AN INTERESTING STORY!
PERHAPS IT COULD BECOME AN ARTICLE!